

Attn: CT State Legislators,

Regarding the possible consolidation of Mental Health and Prevention Services-

I am the Health Educator of a Public Health District, consisting of Cheshire, Prospect and Wolcott. I am also an area resident. I cannot speak highly enough of our local RAC, and our need to keep it intact, and strong, as an avenue for prevention, as a strong voice for healthy CT residents. Our executive Director of our local RAC is Jen DeWitt, who seems to be in 10 places at once, spreading the message of substance abuse prevention, rehabilitation and HOPE, to students, families, community residents.

In the 15 months I have been our Health District's Health Educator I have not seen a more hard-working professional, a more passionate Advocate, or a person who cares more passionately about the message she's tasked with spreading. Jen DeWitt brought inspiration to our town officials to begin the important conversation of addiction in our community. She helped us make sense of the results of the Youth Asset Survey, and she showed up to a dozen night meetings, because that's when people were able to meet.

I have no reason to believe that RACs in other parts of the state are any less dedicated than ours is. The loss of our Regional Action Council would leave a huge void where our prevention services should be. The elimination of our RACs would be a terrible mistake that we would pay dearly for.

Thank you for your consideration.

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